3-16-11

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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VALLEY STAR

the independent student newspaper

Budget cuts continue to hamper students' quest for education.

SEE OPINION PAGE 3

Review of pianist Solon Pierce's solo performance.

SEE VALLEY LIFE PAGE 4

NCAA to ban metal bats in college baseball.

SEE SPORTS PAGE 6

lavalleystar.com | March 16, 2011 | Volume 74 Issue 5

MARCHING FOR EDUCATION

EDGAR ROBLES | VALLEY STAR

MARCH MADNESS - An estimated 18,000 students braved the rain in Sacramento Monday to voice their anger against Gov. Jerry Brown's proposed $1.4 billion cut to California's higher education system.

Valley College's ASU attended March in March Monday.

CRISTINA SERRATO
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

More than 18,000 California college students and supporters swarmed the state Capitol Monday to protest Gov. Jerry Brown's proposed $1.4 billion budget cut to California's higher education system.

"I'm participating in this march today because I feel like [the legislature is] trying to take away education, not giving it to us," said Francesca Mendenhall, an anthropology major from Sierra College in Tahoe. "I'm at a community college… and they are trying to raise fees. If they do, I can't afford to go to school."

The annual March for Higher Education began at 10 a.m. at the Automobile Museum on Front Street. Participants trudged through the rain for more than one mile to the state capitol.

"I think its great that we had tons of students out here, it's important for students to show up and participate with their government... nobody else will fight for them, they need to fight for themselves," said Christopher Chavez, president of the California State Student Association.

The march is an annual event organized by the Student Senate for California Community Colleges and the CSSA. Last year's march boasted 13,000 participants and this year, despite the rain, more than 18,000 people attended.

The large crowd drew onlookers from several local offices, including Michelle Blackwell, an Employment Development Department employee.

"I think it is very encouraging to see that students are out here fighting for what they deserve and what they want. It's our future and my social security. I'm all for it," Blackwell said.

There are 112 community colleges and 23 state universities In California, several of which, including Valley College, attended the event in order to represent the 2.8 million students currently in the higher education system.

"I think it says a lot that so many students are here in the rain speaking up for funding for higher education," stated Linda Michealowski of the California community college chancellor's office. "My hope is that we will get through this immediate crisis and then start to rebuild our investment in the future of California, because without education our state is doomed."

Valley's Associated Student Union supported the event by flying 35 students, protest signs, and several cases of Cup Noodles soup to the capitol. Though the protest signs were quickly ruined in the rain, Valley students did not allow their spirits to be dampened; instead they happily left the Cup Noodles in Gov. Brown's office as a statement of "what students will be reduced to eating if further budget cuts are made."

"Everyone's morale is down because of the budget cuts, and seeing students come to this event and realize that they have the power to make changes was the major accomplishment for the ASU," said Valley's ASU President Hanna Matevosyan. "Students will take this with them for the rest of their lives."

Along with flying students to the Sacramento march, the ASU had arranged to participate in an in-person meeting with representatives, which was to be held following the march as it had been in previous years. However, Senator Alex Padilla was a no-show.

The lack of legislative presence served as a small victory to a few protestors, including Matevosyan.

"That shows to me that we did our job. They are intimidated. They see the powers in numbers and didn't even come into the office today," she said.

Chavez stated that in order to be proactive against budget cuts students need to meet with, call, or write letters to their local and state representatives, attend events to speak up, and hold lawmakers accountable.

BUDGET CUTS IMPACT EDUCATORS

Teachers, as well as students, feel the pain of California's continued budget cuts.

BARRY JAKOB
STAFF WRITER

As budget cuts chip away at California's Community College system, forcing campuses to continually cancel classes, and leaving students struggling to complete graduation requirements, the impact on educators is often overlooked.

With available Valley College classes dwindling, the size of existing classrooms grow and educators are expected to do more with less, creating logistical, emotional and financial challenges.

Crowded classes are becoming a source of stress for both students and teachers. Instructors are struggling with the reality that they must turn students away, denying them educational opportunities. Martin Shay, an English teacher at Valley, has faced tough decisions regarding turning away students who are often passionate in their attempts to add his class.

"The more they came back, the more hope they had," Shay said. "The time arrived when I finally had to say, 'You have to go.' That was very hard for me to do. I'd come to know them."

Sociology professor Laura Scott can relate.

"I've had students cry," Scott said. "It's the last semester before they go, and they won't be able to transfer. It's really heartbreaking."

Additional challenges educators confront revolve around increased workloads due to cut classes.

"It's not just more work for us, it means a decrease in education," said English professor Patrick Hunter, explaining that as educators spend more time grading extra assignments, their ability to thoroughly assess students become limited.

In addition to the added workload and emotional fallout that comes from watching students struggle to obtain an education, today's educators find themselves spending more of their own money on basic teaching necessities such as books, photocopies, sheet paper, Expo pens, printers, and even copiers to compensate for California's fiscal deficit.

"Any given day you run down to the closest Kinkos [sic] you are going to find a bunch of Valley teachers there," said Professor June Miyasaki, Ph.D., Valley's foreign language department chairwoman. "It's part of the out-of-pocket expenses."

"I don't mind spending money on students, its part of the job," said Alan Cowen, chair of Valley's Emergency Services Department.

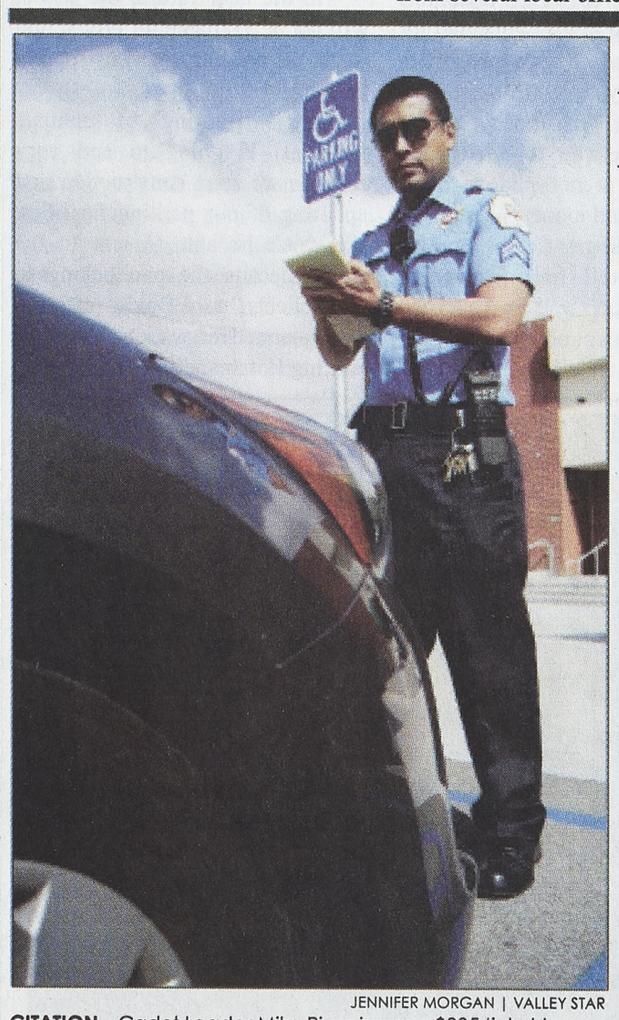
A recent Valley Star survey revealed that, of the 18 teachers questioned, 47 percent reported spending between $100-$600 on teaching-related materials each semester.

Sue Carleo, Valley's president, is cognizant of the challenges teachers face, and is asking for patience.

"Back in the 1970s, I personally spent out of pocket funds for materials for my classes," Carleo said. "It doesn't make it right, but it's the challenge we face in public education."

Matt McShane, a Valley sophomore, recognizes the hard choices educators presently face.

"Teachers are the foundation of society," McShane said. "I completely sympathize with their sacrifices. They are working hard to educate us, and we as students overlook that."



JENNIFER MORGAN | VALLEY STAR

CITATION - Cadet Leader Mike Rivas issues a $335 ticket to a student illegally parked in a handicapped space on campus.

PARKING BRINGS BIG BUCKS TO VALLEY

Permit sales and citation fees generate an estimated half-million dollars in annual revenue.

STEPHANIE COLMAN
NEWS EDITOR

In the first month of parking permit enforcement, Community College District deputies and cadets issued more than 860 citations for parking violations on the Valley College campus.

Crime statistics provided by the sheriff's office indicate an average of 6,400 parking citations are issued each year. According to Deputy Ricky Baker, the office does not break down different types of violations that are assessed, but he estimates the most common infraction is the failure to clearly display a valid permit.

Parking is big business. According to the sheriff's office, most citations issued on campus fall under California Vehicle Code Section 21113 (a), Driving or Parking on Public Grounds, and carry a $35 fine. Additional violations include failure to display a front license plate, fined at $76, and illegal use of a handicapped space, which carries a $335 fine. In total, Valley generates an estimated $125,000 in citations each year. With roughly $350,000 collected in permit sales, parking-related fees account for nearly $500,000 annually.

"The revenue from citations is part of the college's dedicated revenue and contributes to the general fund," said Raul Gonzalez, Valley's associate vice president of administrative services. "The permit money goes in the parking fund, which pays for lot-associated items such as maintenance. It also pays for the cadets."

When money is tight, some students risk a $35 citation by parking without a $20 permit.

"I once saw a sign in someone's window saying, 'I already got a ticket. I'm getting my permit when I get paid next week. Please don't ticket me,'" said Valley student Nicole Plank.

Others say poor signage and poorly marked stalls contribute to citations.

"I got a ticket because I accidentally parked in staff parking on Ethel Avenue," said Valley student Jane Downes. "I had already

|See **PARKING**, Page 2|

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

In the wake of Japan's devastating earthquake and tsunami, the Better Business Bureau reminds financial donors to be aware of fraudulant collection schemes. To check the validity of an organization, visit www.bbb.org/us/charity.

The American Red Cross is accepting donations online at RedCross.org, or text 90999 to donate $10 via mobile phone.

ONLINE EXCLUSIVES:

Students turn out in force against cuts to education, voicing their opinions at two recent rallies. Photo slideshows available online.

These features and more can be found in full @ www.lavalleystar.com

The Valley Star Info & Staff

THE VALLEY STAR is published by students of the journalism and photography classes as a learning experience, offered under the college journalism instructional program.

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Editorial and Advertising Offices
are located at
5800 Fulton Avenue
Valley Glen, CA 91401
(818) 947-2576.

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Lucas Thompson

MANAGING EDITOR
J.P. Spence

COPY EDITOR
Jamie Norried

NEWS EDITOR
Stephanie Colman

VALLEY LIFE EDITOR
David Motte

ONLINE MANAGER
Ivan Zuniga

PHOTO EDITOR
Ricardo Varela

STAFF WRITERS
Courtney Bassler, Rachel Ferreira, Nicole Hutchinson, Barry Jakob, Mindee Jorgensen, Josh Lawrence, Carolina Leon, Rubi Martinez, Nathan McMahon, Narine Petrosyan

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS
Varughan Chapanian, Briana Farina, Eva Gala, Natalie Lozano, Jennifer Morgan, Edgar Robles, Todd Rosenblatt, Samson Uba

ADVERTISING MANAGER
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ADVISERS
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PARKING

Continued from page 1

been at Valley for a semester and honestly didn't know that [lot] was for staff only. There were no signs within 50 feet of me. I checked. It was the first week of school. It was crowded [and] I suspect the lack of signage is so they can give out more tickets."

According to Baker, the Los Angeles Community College District and the L.A. Sheriff's Department do not promote the use of citation quotas.

Liz Molina works as an aid to a special needs Valley student [name withheld] and routinely parks on campus. She was cited for failing to park within a marked stall.

"There were other cars there," Molina said. "I took pictures, fought the ticket, and won."

According to Molina, shortly after winning her appeal the area where she was cited was re-painted and better signage was added.

"To appeal a ticket, the cited individual must complete an appeals form in the sheriff's office," said Baker. "If the citation is overturned on initial appeal, the violation is cancelled. If upheld, the individual can seek a hearing to further dispute the ticket. In order to initiate a hearing, the person must leave a check for the amount of the violation, which is held until the outcome of the hearing. In either case, there may be an administrative fee for each process."

BLOOD DRIVE HELPS MEET OVERWHELMING DEMAND

The Valley community united to donate blood during a time of great need.

COURTNEY BASSLER
STAFF WRITER

The devastation facing Japan, coupled with a shortage in local blood banks, inspired more than 60 Valley College community members to donate blood Monday.

The Red Cross blood drive marked the first for the spring semester, and another one is scheduled for May 9 in Monarch Hall.

"With the disaster in Japan, more seem to understand the need for blood," said Nadia Mills, a donor recruitment associate with the Red Cross. "It kind of sucks that a disaster has to happen for people to come in, but it opens their eyes. If we had the blood supply already, we wouldn't be struggling like we are now."

According to Registered Nurse Nira Fishman, the American Red Cross supervisor for the blood drive at Valley, each person who donates blood can save three lives.

"Everyone should come and donate," said Fishman. "It's a great cause, and they're giving back to the community."

Valley business major Sonia Robles donated blood for the second time in her life during the Valley drive. Donating blood hit home for her.

"I figured I would donate blood today because my grandmother recently had a blood transfusion, so I know that this helps other people's grandmothers," said Robles. "It's convenient and right here. It's the least I could do."

Many students came out to donate for the first time, like psychology major Danielle Fisher.

"I decided to donate today because my birthday is on Thursday," said Fisher. "I just wanted to do something good for somebody."

Courtney Perkins, biology major has donated five times before and urges other students to donate as well.

"It's good to just help somebody out, a few people out," said Perkins. "It's a good experience."

Individuals can donate blood every 56 days. For more information about where to donate and when, visit http://www.redcrossblood.org/socal.

VALLEY EXPERIENCES A TASTE OF "PARENTHOOD"

A setting familiar to students and staff becomes part of Hollywood's magic.

NATHAN MCMAHON
STAFF WRITER

Astute Valley College students and staff watching last Tuesday's episode of the NBC family drama "Parenthood," may have noticed the scene set at a dance school had an oddly familiar look to it. Standing in for the dance school was Valley's own North Gym on Hatteras St.

Production of the episode titled "Qualities and Difficulties," brought a dash of glitz and a pinch of glamour while filming on the Valley campus. In the past, Valley has played host to many varied entertainment shows and films, including the primetime vintage soap opera, "Falcon Crest," and the classic comedy film, "Throw Momma from the Train."

"Most of the time … we would rent parking … what they would call a base camp, because they would be filming in the neighborhood," said Luke Davis, administrative services supervisor for Valley, referring to the crews and studios that utilize the buildings and parking on campus.

In the case of "Parenthood," both parking for the crew and buildings for shooting were used for about three days. The three days of prep, filming, and clean-up resulted in about one minute of screen time for the television show.

Any of these non-academic events are cleared through the Master Calendar Office, and student priorities are taken into serious consideration.

"Students always come first with us," said Davis.

Davis also stated that plans to rent parking spaces and buildings are presented to the Academic Affairs office for its input, with the school's curriculum and scheduled events always taking priority over the needs of prospective film crews.

When questioned about the cost of renting parking and buildings to different productions, Davis explained that payment works on a sliding scale, as the needs of different size productions fluctuate. The money collected for the renting of campus properties goes directly into the school's general fund. This money can be used in any way to enrich the school, and is not tied to more restrictive bond money.

This sliding scale system also works out well for independent filmmakers in the San Fernando Valley and surrounding areas.

Annick Wolkan, a local independent film and documentary producer, feels that the sliding scale makes access to shooting locations for her productions more feasible.

"Businesses or locations that have a sliding scale are more receptive to a small filmmaker coming in for a short film, as well as the big budget [films], like Warner Bros. movies," said Wolkan. "It helps me because it gives me more access to these locations."

When Valley's Media Arts Chair, Eric Swelstad was asked about media arts students' involvement with on-location film crews, he was quick to lament their lack of involvement, but saw a future opportunity for the students.

"It would be a great idea, actually, to have students get a chance to maybe get some experience working or at least observing on a show like that," said Swelstad.

In the near future, the school will not be available for production work, as parking lot construction takes priority.

"This [renting of campus facilities] is going to end very soon as we start construction and updating of our parking facilities. We won't be able to rent to the studios because the space belongs to the students," said Davis, referring to the planned renovation of Valley's parking Lot A and Lot D.

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ONLINE COURSES ON THE RISE

Valley expands online instruction to meet student demand.

RACHEL FERREIRA
STAFF WRITER

The appeal of online classes continues to grow for Valley College students as they turn toward less traditional routes in education, which allow them to work from home to accommodate their schedules.

As a result of the Title 5 federal grant Valley received in 2007, online class offerings have jumped dramatically since first introduced in 2001. Online enrollment has increased to accommodate more than 6,100 students in the 2009-2010 school year. Pass rates and program retention have also increased. In 2008-2009, 55 percent of enrolled students completed an online course with a grade of C or higher. In 2009-2010, the pass rate rose to 59 percent, with 84 percent of enrolled students continuing with online or hybrid classes the following semester.

Valley President Sue Carleo has been pushing to expand the school's online class system, but has also had to balance this with the budget cuts the California Community College District is facing.

"I've asked the Technology Committee and Educational Planning Committee to make a recommendation through our shared governance process, [regarding] what percentage of the college's courses should be offered online," Carleo said. "As we give more and more options to students for courses, we also need to make available students services such as online counseling. This is what the grant can be used for."

Khaled Hussain, Valley's Distance Education coordinator and director of Title 5, has been happy with the direction online classes have taken at Valley. As a political science professor who has also taught online courses, he's had firsthand experience with the online process and the work these classes involve.

"There's a myth out there that these are easy-A classes, but they're not," Hussain said. "However, it's a very rich experience. In online classes you have to discuss, you have to participate, turn in your posts."

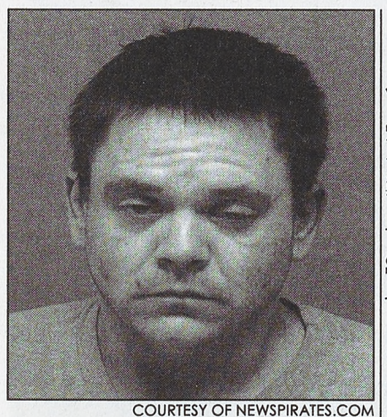
Child development major Jacquelin Katash, who is currently taking Art 103 online, has seen both the benefits and drawbacks of online courses.

"You can accomplish your studies from the comfort of your home," Katash said. "Also, being a single working mother, it helps me accomplish my academic requirements at a schedule that works for me. It's difficult though, because you can't always get your questions answered from certain professors."

In addition to the appeal in working from home, the anonymity of online classes is also an advantage for those students who may not feel comfortable speaking up in the typical classroom discussion.

"Some students are shy in regular classes, but when you're online no one can see your face," Hussain said. "[With online classes], you can use your house cat's face as the avatar if you want. Because you're not intimidated in any way, there's a lot more participation."

EDITOR'S NOTE:
The views expressed on this page are solely those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Valley Star, its instructors, editors, staff or those of Los Angeles Valley College, its administrators, faculty, staff, or students.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A HERO'S WELCOME TO THE DEATH PENALTY

The 22 charges recently leveled at Pfc. Bradley Manning is a disgusting reminder of where our country's priorities lie.

NATHAN McMAHON
STAFF WRITER

The systematic and dogged pursuit of the truth is a sacred and fundamental right that should never be infringed upon or maligned. In the case of Pfc. Bradley Manning and his brave act, just the opposite has happened.

To bring you up to date, the massive amount of State Department documents and e-mails that made up the bulk of the WikiLeaks scandal was allegedly the result of Manning, who gave the documents and footage to WikiLeaks. This attempt to right some of the wrongs the previously corrupt Bush Administration, and now faltering Obama Administration, foisted on this world.

It started with a veritable bang when footage of journalists and civilians, being gunned down by an American Apache chopper in Iraq was exposed on WikiLeaks. This disgusting war crime wasn't what disturbed our current administration; they focused their sights on who leaked it.

In the following weeks a multitude of correspondences from State Department officials in the form of e-mails and cables were released numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

The aftershocks of this document dump are still reverberating. Looking at the recent revolution in Tunisia, it can be can easily concluded that if not for Robert Godec, U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia, and his leaked e-mail discussing the corruption of Tunisia's now ousted – but U.S.-backed – dictator President Ben Ali, the patriotic resistance in Tunisia may not have been as strong. If the revolt in Tunisia hadn't been so successful, we could also conclude that the triumphant uprisings in other disenfranchised Arab nations, such as Egypt and Libya, may not have occurred as well.

This butterfly effect of change is a direct result of Manning's actions.

Instead of our nation forcing democracy down the throats of a reluctant Arab world by way of war, we can instead see the fruits of a proper revolution lead by a disenfranchised people who have had enough of corrupt dictators.

It is not too much to think that this wave of revolution would have eventually swept ashore in Iraq or Afghanistan as well. The world would be a different place if that were the case, but unfortunately our misguided endeavors in nation building interfered with that natural occurrence of revolt.

So now, Manning sits in a military jail cell, with little to no communication with the outside world. The U.S. government recently leveled 22 charges against him, including a charge of "aiding the enemy." This charge itself carries the possibility of the death penalty.

While bankers fleece the nation with little to no repercussions, and corporations evade taxes and destroy the middle class in the process, and politicians sit idly by, a true hero is wasting away in a jail cell. It is outrageous, and anger isn't enough to right this wrong.

JOURNALISM ETHICS AND THE CAMPUS

Price of admission does not include our credibility.

STAFF EDITORIAL

The number one priority for the Valley Star is to provide content to students that are unique to them and their experience at Valley.

One of these stories that we felt was important to Valley College was the recent March in March protest in Sacramento regarding a bill pertaining to education cuts. Our Associated Student Union offered to fly a writer and photographer to the protest in what was understood to be coverage of an important event that affects all students.

An issue arose when ASU misunderstood our attendance as third-party observers covering an event for being actual protestors. Our writer not only refused to wear the shirt mandated to be worn by ASU advisor Elizabeth Ortiz but also objected to being included in the group photo, as it is not appropriate for journalists to be a part of the story they are covering.

Tension worsened as ASU President Hanna Matevosyan assumed that since ASU had funded our seats, we would be writing a puff piece based on them and their trip. Insult was added when Matevosyan claimed that she actually planned to bring reporters from the Daily News, but chose instead to invite us.

The Valley Star has covered this story before on our own dime and have no qualms reporting stories. Second, as much as we would to like to thank Matevosyan for choosing us second to the Daily News for campus coverage, they too would have never agreed to come to Sacramento in exchange for a vanity article about Valley's ASU. Actually, that statement applies to any ethical newspaper.

Lastly, our writer informed Matevosyan, that "news is news and will be covered unbiased," while our ASU president voiced concerns over scrutiny the Valley Star has had with her administration.

It's hard to justify her point of view considering the Valley Star e-mailed her questions regarding this trip specifically because she wanted to avoid being misquoted. Ultimately the questions were never answered and specifically stated to the Valley Star editor in chief that she will "refuse to work with the Valley Star." This was also after plans to receive an 800-word letter to the editor never came to fruition.

Misconceptions like this lead to students openly questioning the effectiveness of their student union while furthering the gap between what Matevosyan thinks the Valley Star is and what we actually do. If Matevosyan has an issue with scrutiny pertaining to her administration, we caution that she look realistically at her track record, instead of the perceived notion of a newspaper trying to hurt someone's feelings.

News is news, while opinion is a separate entity. The Valley Star will continue to provide the most in- depth, campus-centric content that is truly about the event being covered. However, the opinion section is the voice of our students. Be it a column, standard editorial, letter to the editor, or valley view, this is how students feel about their surroundings at Valley.

Bottom line, we at the Valley Star are the voice of the students. As it says on every issue, "The independent student newspaper."

THE TROUBLE WITH TEXAS

A proposed bill allowing college students and faculty the right to carry guns on campus is an inconsiderable option.

CAROLINA LEON
STAFF WRITER

It's obvious Texas is gun friendly, but passing a bill allowing faculty and students to carry concealed guns at universities is straight out ridiculous. Student shootings are bad enough, but endorsing guns on campus as self defense is irrational, especially in Texas.

Last September, a student at the University of Texas fired several shots on campus before killing himself, and in 1966 one of the worst shootings occurred on the same campus. It's unbelievable that the people of Texas would favor guns on campus after reoccurring tragedy.

Although the Second Amendment in the U.S. Constitution allows Americans the right to keep or bear arms individually, it's a scary thought. Nowadays no one can be trusted and it's worse if they're packing an AK-47 on campus.

Campus grounds are safe learning environments and allowing just anyone to carry a gun around doesn't send a welcoming message. If the proposed law passes, university students will be in fear of their classmates and teachers during classes. Teachers will also have the same fears. These concerns create unnecessary stress to everyone.

Sen. Jeff Wentworth, R-San Antonio, many members of the House of Representatives, and many Texans believe guns should be allowed on campus as a self-defense tactic, but that's not a reasonable resolution.

"I don't ever want to see repeated on a Texas college campus what happened at Virginia Tech, where some deranged, suicidal madman goes into a building and is able to pick off totally defenseless kids like sitting ducks," said Wentworth.

College students also deal with a variety of pressures, financial hardships and academic struggles, which often causes depression. People who are depressed or feeling pressured are not mentally stable enough to carry guns.

It's plain and clear, allowing guns to solve problems simply won't. They don't belong in the hands of many people and they certainly don't belong on university campuses.

THE DIET DONUT PLAN

Gas prices are soaring, but responsible consumerism isn't.

RACHEL FERREIRA
STAFF WRITER

The sudden spike in rising retail gas prices has arrived just in time for Cadillac to release the first ever "full-size luxury hybrid SUV," which is about as ridiculous as it sounds.

As a result of the unrest in the Middle East and Libya, oil prices have reached their highest level in almost three years, and California, who receives more than half of its 1.2 billion gallons of gasoline consumed each month from foreign sources, has been hit hard. So hard, in fact, that for the past two weeks we've had the nation's highest average gas prices. It's only as of March 11, that Hawaii beat us at an average of $3.970 per gallon.

Yet, despite gas prices reaching nearly $4 per gallon before summer, this year Cadillac still managed to produce a 2011 Escalade Hybrid.

There's nothing more heartwarming than knowing General Motors, who cost us $50 billion to be federally bailed out, managed to create the car equivalent of a diet donut. Why should the focus on a full-size luxury hybrid be a pat on the back when the average American household has only 2.59 people in it and the vast majority of us don't require mini enforced buses to tote us around and shield us from the paparazzi. Never mind that foreign car brands like Kia and Honda whose focus on small, fuel-efficient vehicles were the ones who drew consumer interest away from our home brands, while American companies continued to focus on status symbol cars with shorter shelf lives.

As of last week, the Energy Information Administration said that households would pay an average of $700 more for gasoline this year than in 2010, which clearly means in the foreseeable future we will all be able to justify purchasing these $80,000 behemoths. Clearly, those non-celebrities who actually require a car that seats eight people will look to the chrome-tastic Escalade Hybrid's 20 city miles per gallon rather than the 2007 Acura's 17-19 city mpg at $25,000. Oh right, Cadillac, the focus was on luxury.

GOT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR?

Letters to the editor can be sent to: **editor@lavalleystar.com** or submitted online at **www.lavalleystar.com.** Letters must be limited to 300 words and may be edited for content. Full name and contact information must be supplied in order for letters to be printed. Send by Thursday for the following week's issue.

GRAY CLOUDS OVER SUMMER

Cutting summer session leaves students with tough decisions to make.

BARRY JAKOB
STAFF WRITER

Budget cuts have yet again reared its ugly head to threaten the opportunity out of summer. Recent reports on campus have indicated that the Los Angeles Community College District is planning to leave over 5,000 transfer students locked out of classrooms this summer because of a simple lack of funds.

"All California community colleges are in the same boat," said Sue Carleo, who has been Valley's president since June 2008. "We have significant budget challenges."

Carleo, who has been a faculty member at Valley since 1976, has seen her share of ups and downs. "We (Valley) go through an eight to 10 year cycle. We go up, down, up, and down. We are roughly three to four years away from recovery. It's incredibly painful, none of the solutions are doing a whole lot."

You can say that again. The setback of summer session reflects two flaws within California's public education arena. First, the state's policy of running schools and universities as a string of big businesses has created nothing shorter than fiscal chaos. Second is the absence of any powerful, consolidated, student-led association that will fight in our corner when legislators get too trigger happy on cutting funds from academics.

Addressing the plights of transfer students, Carleo reiterated, "First of all, I would like you to know that the message that myself and other presidents are sending is that we are part of the solution, not the problem. ... It causes all of us here great sadness to have to do this. I have no choice. It's very, very difficult. Our primary focus is on transfer career, technical education, and basic skills. ...We have to stay in business."

Valley possesses a business entity within its structure that keeps the school running. With that observation, we can finger-point the problem. California's policy of transforming educational institutions into commercial byproducts has crippled the potential of the state's next generation. The ideal meritocracy that once was the American Dream is threatened by internal forces arguing about one thing: money.

The last and ultimate flaw that the elimination of summer school beckons is the unfair, unequal, and powerless position that students are given at California's "table of power." The voices of millions are being drowned away by our inability to come together and fight back against legislators and budget deficits.

"The challenge I put to students is get involved. There is plenty of opportunity," said Carleo, regarding the ineffectiveness of today's student governments.

When asked whether or not Valley can see an end to the budget crisis, she responded, "I have to believe it."

Problems like the summer session debacle teach an important lesson. In this case, it highlights the flaws of capitalizing public education. Most importantly, it taunts our inability as students to fight back and reform in a world where education is more important than ever before.

TWO CENTS FROM SPENCE

ONLY WHEN IT MATTERS

Society is never able to capitalize on the goodwill acheived from helping their fellow man.

J.P. SPENCE

It only took a 9.0 magnitude earthquake with global ramifications to put everything in perspective. It may be hard to argue foreign policy when that land may or may not be there.

Obviously global efforts are under way to help remedy the horrific tragedy in Japan, but there has to come a time where society can really work together outside of an enormous natural disaster.

Regardless of creed, foreign policy, ideology, or whatever else, like it or not we are a global community. It's great that people can come together when disaster strikes and help get things back on track such as Chile, Haiti, New Zealand, and now Japan, but as soon as things become copacetic, all goodwill is gone.

Because we restore the destroyed land, repair the nuclear reactors, raise the Nikkei Index and host some god-awful celebrity telethon where idiot celebrities make statements, we're only fixing a tertiary problem.

What happens after the imminent danger is gone?

There is the physical aftermath of the massive earthquake that occurred March 11; the destruction, the lives lost and the mental aftermath of all the survivors. If that isn't bad enough, the world now has to deal with potential nuclear fallout with several nuclear plants being breached or catching on fire. We're now facing an issue that is usually reserved for comic book origin stories. Combine that with factories shutting down and stock markets plunging worldwide, things are looking less than spectacular. The sooner we realize that if a major country suffers we all suffer, the better off society will be.

Japan will be repaired and the sun will rise again on the third largest economy in the world. It's completely cliché but when the indomitable and generous spirit of man is at its apex, it's nothing short of awe-inspiring. Just imagine what the possibilities would be if that goodwill was consistent.

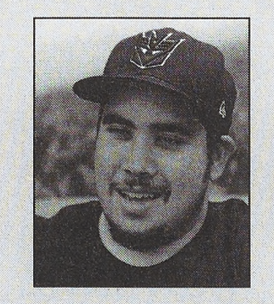
Society as a whole needs to understand the fragility of humanity. It's laughable that we can conduct proxy wars in the name of abstract concepts, but when nature strikes with its infinite and literal might, then it's time to unite. Human life is human life, always, and we need to embrace it at all costs even if we don't like other people because they aren't exactly like us or that thet aren't pro-union.

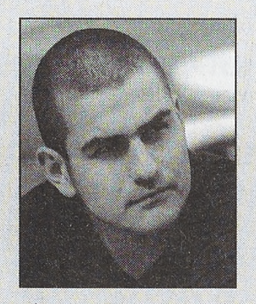
The world is an imperfect place and there are sure to be more bad times to come. If we could just hold onto what makes mankind so amazing, maybe we could only worry about Mother Nature and not man-made disasters.

E-mail J.P. Spence at *managing@lavalleystar.com*
Send general comments to *valleystar@lavalleystar.com*

VALLEY VIEW | DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE AS PREPARED AS YOU SHOULD BE IF A MAJOR CATASTROPHE OCCURRED?

"Yeah, of course I would. We all know the world's going to end soon, so why not embrace it?"
- ANTHONY RAMIREZ
UNDECIDED


"Prepared, no. Even if a catastrophe strikes, there's no way that I would personally be prepared for it."
- STEVEN TOLEDO
NURSING


"No, because I don't have anything. I don't have food supplies and shelter."
- DAVID GRIGORIAN
UNDECIDED

"Well usually Red Cross said to have two suitcases with water, I change the water every six months."
- MARIA LUCY ROSELLO
ART

"I don't know. Not really, because those things don't happen here."
- MARGARET MAJUCHROWICZ
NURSING

COMPILED BY COURTNEY BASSLER AND VARUGHAN CHAMPANIAN| VALLEY STAR

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Friday, 18

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Monday, 21

Undecided Major/ Career Workshop
1-2 p.m.

How to Transfer Workshop
5:30-6:30 p.m.

CSUN Rep
12-6:45 p.m.

Tuesday, 22

"Careers in Business" Speakers Panel
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How to Transfer Workshop
1-2 p.m.

All activities in the Career/ Transfer Center, Student Servicers Annex, unless other wise indicated. For further information call (818) 947-2646.

A SERIOUS NOTE

Piano concert showcases talent but lacks enthusiasm.

MINDEE JORGENSEN
STAFF WRITER

Solon Pierce is serious about playing piano and does so in a very serious manner. His program was a switch from the first two concerts of the free series, which were more of an interactive learning experience. The performers seemed more passionate about playing and appeared to be enjoying themselves.

Pierce's program was a stark contrast, a taste of proper classical etiquette. He hardly acknowledged the audience, except to calmly bow, and point out two changes in the program. He did not break a smile once. His solo piano concert consisted of seven pieces according to the program, but it was hard to follow where he was in the performance because he only spoke to the audience twice.

He started his concert with a slow, sad, and expressive piece. Although it was played skillfully, he could have started with something more upbeat. The first song should grab the audience's attention, not lull them to sleep. It was a song that would be hard for someone who is not a musician to appreciate; it lacked steady rhythm, and a repeated melodic phrase.

Although his program was introduced as an eclectic mix of songs, they almost all were played in the same style; lots of racing arpeggios, drastic dynamics that seemed to follow the free flowing tempo, and lack of a steady beat. He played the songs expressively, yet Pierce himself was completely expressionless. It was hard to tell if he was getting any enjoyment out of performing, or had any passion for the music.

Of course, the lack of passion could have been due to the atmosphere of the room. The program he played was more suited for a concert hall filled with men and women in their fanciest attire, with all the spot lights gleaming down upon him, the sole performer. Due to a lack of proper stage lighting, he was playing to a room full of college students in jeans and sweatshirts, themselves lit up under bright florescent lights.

The "Graceful Ghost Rag" was the highlight of his performance. It was energetic, with a steady beat you could dance to. It was the only piece that showed diversity in his style of playing.

He closed with his own rendition of the song "Somewhere," from the musical "The West Side Story." He managed to take a beautiful and classic melody, add frills and arpeggios, and strip it of any rhythmic beat it once had. Although it was played with an impressive skill level, it was not an impressive take on the song.

EGAR ROBLES | VALLEY STAR
IVORY TOUCH - Solon Pierce plays a classical piece by Claude Debussy during Wednesday's free concert.

ON AIR WITH MR. B

Valley College broadcasting professor gets the best of both worlds, both living and teaching his dream.

NARINE PETROSYAN
STAFF WRITER

It's one thing to talk about what you love, but another to actually live and experience it. Valley College's broadcasting professor Jason Beaton does just that and more.

Professor Beaton, or Mr.B as some like to call him, has been teaching since 1998 and spent the last 20 years working for the Los Angeles radio industry. He has been at Valley for three years as a professor, serves on the academic senate, directs Valley's radio station, and is also a former student who holds a degree in broadcasting as well as the prestigious Certified Radio Marketing Consultant and Certified Digital Marketing Consultant from the Radio Advertising Bureau.

"We have the greatest broadcasting program than any other community college. Los Angeles Valley College is the school that taught me how to be a broadcaster," said Beaton. His first broadcasting job was as a remote engineer in Canyon Country at KBET 1220AM.

Along with raising a family with "two very talkative" sons, Professor Beaton manages to teach classes and maintain the radio station's five studios. He is currently in the process of setting up a couple of podcasting studios for future production and courses. Constantly updating computers and creating music logs allow program station events to be played on air. Currently he has written several new classes for Valleys broadcasting discipline that relate to the industry today.

As far as his resume goes, Beaton fills a variety of broadcasting positions on legendary radio stations such as KRLA, KLXS, KLAC, KWIZ, and many more. He has worked with many broadcasting heads such as Gary Owens, Pete Marshall, Art Laboe, and many more.

Beaton devotes a lot of his talent and experience to Valley. "There is no greater satisfaction in life than coming full circle to the place you started and to be able to give back the knowledge I learned over the last 20 years to the students here today. The students at Valley are the best!"

VARUGHAN CHAPANIAN | VALLEY STAR
RADIO GA GA - Former Valley student Jason Beaton returns to teach.

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SO IT GOES...

BROADWAY GETS BROADER

Spider-Man leads the way for other unorthodox stage shows on the great white way.

DAVID MOTTE

As Spider-Man usurps the Broadway spotlight from singing cats and dancing witches, many other unorthodox stage shows are following in the web-slinger's footsteps. Here's a look at what may be Broadway's zaniest season ever.

Pee-Wee Herman, The Addams Family and Spider-Man have all come to see new life as stage shows, making Broadway's playbill seem more like that of Saturday morning cartoons. Just as the literary and film worlds have been completely dominated by subject matter aimed at young adults, it seems that Broadway has also succumb to lowering its standards by taking money from tweens.

Also popular with the kids is punk band Green Day whose staged musical "American Idiot" won two Tony Awards for Lighting Design and Scenic Design in its year-long run in 2010. The show was even nominated over "La Cage Aux Folles" for Best Musical. Based on their best-selling album of the same name, "American Idiot" features music from the album and other songs written by the band. Front man Billie Joe Armstrong even makes an appearance in the show as St. Jimmy, a drug-addled manifestation of the main character.

The 1992 film "Sister Act," starring Whoopi Goldberg has also found its way to the stage as a new musical. Though Goldberg herself will not be reprising her role as the sassy Vegas performer, the show will feature 17 gospel-singing nuns when it previews on March 24.

Several stand-up comedians such as Kathy Griffin, John Leguizamo, Chris Rock, and Dane Cook have all jumped on the Broadway train. "Kathy Griffin Wants a Tony," Leguizamo's "Ghetto Clown," Rock's "The Motherfu**er With the Hat," and "Fat Pig" featuring Dane Cook will all open within six months of each other. Judging by its title and Chris Rock's reputation, "The Motherfu**er In the Hat" promises to feature the most f-bombs ever heard on Broadway.

Perhaps the most outrageous (and scandalous) musical coming out this year is "The Book of Mormon" written by "South Park" creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone. "The Book of Mormon" is a blasphemous musical about two Mormon missionaries sent to Uganda. The show, which opens March 24 at the Eugene O'Neil Theatre, is not the first time Stone and Parker have lampooned the Church of Latter-day Saints. Their first attack on Joseph Smith and his religion was in the 1998 film "Orgasmo," which featured Parker as a Mormon missionary who becomes a porn star. The religion has also been the butt of many South Park jokes.

"It's a big musical. I think people will be surprised by how the form is very traditional even though the subject matter is not," Stone told Entertainment Weekly. "We set out to tell a good story. And then we're just offensive people."

Though the aforementioned stage plays promise to be entertaining and could potentially introduce theater to a younger audience, there is no denying that the Broadway once reserved for Neil Simon and Stephen Sondheim has lost its prestige.

E-mail NAME HERE at
EMAIL@lavalleystar.com
Send general comments to
valleystar@lavalleystar.com

COURTESY OF WARNER BROS.

MURDER BY NUMBERS

"Red Riding Hood" plays out like a bad game of "Clue."

J.P. SPENCE
MANAGING EDITOR

"Red Riding Hood" is one of those films that, as you walk out of the theater, makes you ask yourself what just happened.

Adapted (very loosely adapted) from the classic fairy tale about little Red Riding Hood venturing into the forest amid canine conundrums, the 2011 version is similar in that there is a forest, a red hood, and a wolf. And that's it. Rather, director Catherine Hardwicke and writer David Leslie Johnson decide to keep a few motifs for window dressing and opt for a supernatural "Melrose Place" set in some generic old time-y setting.

If the film had some of the same acting depth as "Melrose's Place" then there would be some positive things to mention about it. Amanda Seyfried has mastered the innocent look without a doubt. Now if she could focus on acting instead of trying to sound so breathy she might have a chance of people taking her seriously. There is some consideration into the male roles (Shiloh Fernandez, Max Irons, Lukas Haas) given that their main purpose was to look transfixed by Seyfried's "innocent" look, but it's the adults who commit the major faux pas.

Billy Burke hasn't met a role he didn't like, but it's inexplicable why Virginia Madsen, Julie Christie, and Gary Oldman are even within shouting distance of this film. There isn't much screen time for Madsen and Christie, but all three play walking stereotypes that belie their true acting pedigree.

The biggest faults for "Red Riding Hood" is the false advertising of big name actors attached to the project combined with the film trying to be too smart for its own good.

Johnson, whose last work was the 2009 horror film "Orphan" decided that adapting the film from "The Uses of Enchantment" would be better than being original. In "The Uses of Enchantment," the author analyzes fairy tales through the scope of Freudian psychology. Apparently Johnson rivaled that ethos with plot holes and malapropisms. Same thing.

With all that said, there couldn't be a better director than Hardwicke. The problem with Hardwicke is that she is increasingly becoming a one-note director. Be it "Thirteen," "The Nativity Story," "Twilight," or "Red Riding Hood," Hardwicke's consistent theme of the loss of nubile innocence immediately followed by (usually misguided) sexual empowerment has become a tired joke.

Not only can you smell the setup from a mile away, but it completely offsets the premise, if there was one. There is no true value to the story in Amanda Seyfried boinking the guy who later becomes the wolf except for pure shock value. There would be more respect if we called it what it was.

Suffice it to say, but the best thing about "Red Riding Hood" is that it ends.

I'VE SEEN THAT MOVIE TOO

It can't be shock and awe if there is no shock and awe.

J.P. SPENCE
MANAGING EDITOR

The main question in Hollywood these days is if a film should be made with the moniker "Adapted from" attached to it, or go for the straight rip-off.

"Battle: Los Angeles" opted for the second.

On paper, the inspiration for the film was inspired by the actual Battle for Los Angeles, a false alarm air raid of Los Angeles during World War II. The film, originally called "Battle for Los Angeles" hit a snag because it's hard to make a film about something that didn't really happen. Once a director is out of ideas then the "inspiration" begins.

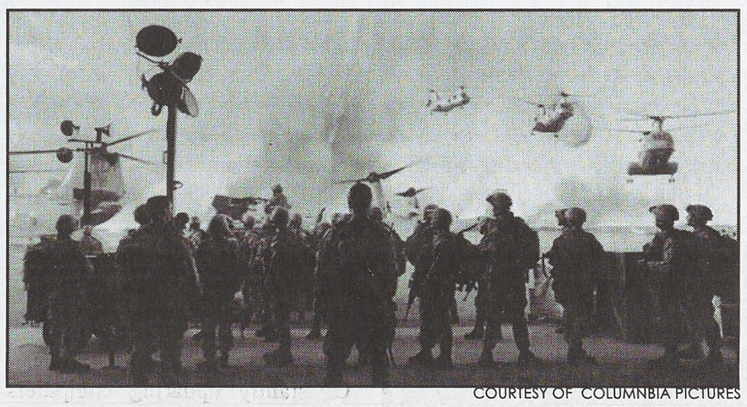
Straight up, this film is a blatant rip-off of "Independence Day," the 1996 film starring Will Smith. Films like this never rely on plot, which makes the plot for "Battle: Los Angeles" appear lazy and insulting. If you've seen "Independence Day," the one where aliens kick our butts for a hour and half and then in the last thirty minutes out of desperation the humans do something completely logical to save the day with the requisite hero montage, then you've seen "Battle: Los Angeles."

Director Jonathan Liebesman has stated that he intended for the film to be a realistic depiction of an alien invasion. The director also cited "Saving Private Ryan" and "Black Hawk Down" as influences. It's really hard to see the impact those films made considering the film looks more like downloadable content for "Gears of War" on your XBOX 360 than a legitimate war film. Another difference between the source material and Liebesman's work is acting and production value. Ridley Scott and Roland Emmerich are expert filmmakers who know how to capture a scene by letting the atmosphere unfold and envelope the audience in the horror of war. Not so much with "Battle." Liebesman relied on the CGI to inspire awe, which led the audience to stare at a giant computer screen instead of war. Horrific on a completely different level. Hopefully, we'll have a new batch of directors who didn't go to the Michael Bay school of lousy filmmaking.

Aaron Eckhart, Michelle Rodriguez and Bridget Moynahan star in the film. The only thing Rodriguez could do to surprise anyone is to play someone who wasn't a "badass."

This is yet another disappointing turn for Eckhart who has seemingly given up on character development and settled for being a face. At least Matthew McConaughey is trying.

Ultimately "Battle: Los Angeles" is a film that's going to be seen because there is nothing better to see in the theater. There are better things the viewer can do with their time than see this film. For example: doing absolutely nothing.



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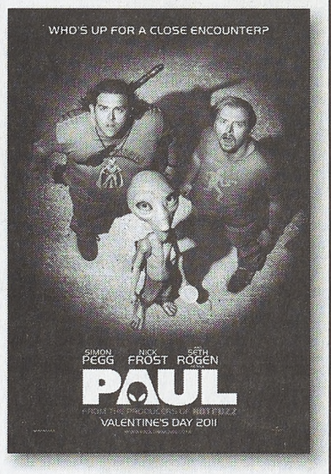

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SCOTT MITCHELL | SPECIAL TO THE STAR

CSUN INVITATIONAL - The Valley College track and field teams competed Saturday in the Northridge Invitational held at CSUN. A meet made up of more than 20 events, each runner qualified to compete in a variety of relays and medleys throughout the day. The women's team placed first in three heats in the 100-meter dash competition. The men's team struggled to place higher than fourth place in any of the events. The next meet for the Monarchs will be held at Cuesta College Saturday March 12 at 12 noon.

TWELVE GAME LOSING STREAK FOR MONARCH BASEBALL

Monarchs still can't sync up offense and lose to the Glendale Vaqueros.

JOSHUA LAWRENCE
STAFF WRITER

The sun was shining brightly during the warm afternoon baseball game as the Monarchs took the field, looking to snap their nine-game losing streak and increase their below par batting average. However, the Vaqueros also came out ready to snap their four-game losing streak and did just that, defeating the Monarchs 3-0.

Glendale started the game focused on its goal and took an early lead with a run in the first inning.

Vaquero starting pitcher Thomas Korn figured out the Monarch offense early and dominated from the mound throughout the game.

"Our pitching and defense was really good," said Monarch Head Coach Dave Mallas. "We gave up three runs and we're not giving up any more than five runs at times."

The Monarchs were only able to get one hit through the entire game. Freshman third baseman Robert Gonzalez was able to put the bat on the ball earning a single during the seventh inning. However, the team was not able to capitalize with Gonzalez on base as the inning ended with a fly out.

After the Vaqueros earned a third run in the top of the sixth neither team was able to bring a runner across home plate.

Monarch relief pitcher Freddy Contreras came in to pitch after the final run in the top of the sixth and was able to shut down the Vaqueros despite another scare in the top of the seventh inning. Two wild pitches from Contreras helped the Vaquero runner advance to third with one out. In spite of this, he baffled the following two Vaqueros batters, collecting two outs and ending the inning.

"We could have had some better at-bats," said Gonzalez. "We [played] all right though. We just need to hit the ball and we'll be all right. We're in every game, behind by one or two runs, we just need to hit the ball."

The Monarchs' season batting average is .200, whereas the Monarchs' Glendale opponents are batting .278 and have 38 more at-bats than the Monarchs. Shortstop Ivan Vela leads the team with 48 at-bats, starting all 15 games to date. The Monarchs record is 3-13 and 0-4 in conference play.

"Our pitching is still solid, we just need to hit the ball," said Mallas.

Out of the 20 batters, 19 are batting less than .300 and they have accumulated 122 strikeouts compared to Monarch opponents that have accrued 68.

The Monarchs' next game is March 17 against the West Los Angeles Wildcats at 2 p.m.

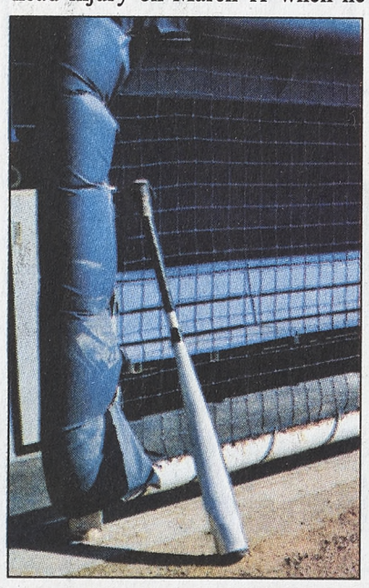
NCAA BASEBALL PUTS BAN ON METAL BATS

The NCAA seeks to protect its players and enhance the game by banning metal bats on the diamond.

BARRY JAKOB
STAFF WRITER

Starting this season, NCAA baseball and the California Interscholastic Federation will ban the use of metal bats, citing recent safety concerns. The new move focuses particularly on metal bats, which are known for their "high exit velocity" and larger-than-normal "sweet spots," making hitters more effective at hitting home runs.

The NCAA's actions stem from a rise in freak accidents involving specific cases of pitchers getting seriously injured from hits off metal bats. Gunnar Sandberg, a 17-year-old pitcher from Marin Catholic High School, suffered a near fatal head injury on March 11 when he was struck by a line drive hit by a metal bat. Sandberg suffered a fractured skull, and was placed in a medically induced coma for four days to control the swelling in his brain. Sandberg's injury is one of the recent strings of several accidents nationwide involving specific cases of pitchers victimized by the power of metal bats.



The evolution of the bat corresponds to a rise in batting average statistics over the past 20 years. From the heavy aluminum bats used in the 1970s, to the lightweight alloy bats used today, the ban brings hitters back to the basics, and some players aren't happy about it.

When asked about the ban, Monarch outfielder Chris Viltz said, "It ruined college baseball."

Dave Mallas takes a different perspective. Mallas, Valley's head baseball coach, supports the actions of the NCAA. "Coaches, pitchers, scouts, they like the ban. Hitters don't like it," said Mallas.

In a statement released by the NCAA, the baseball rule committee, which is responsible for protecting athletes, said, "The committee believes this action (the ban) is needed in order to protect the integrity of the game and to enhance the safety of the student-athletes."

For now, athletes in high school and colleges will have to adjust to the new ban and rediscover their swinging finesse.

"They're safer," Mallas said. "The old (metal) bats are dangerous … I think it was the right call. The numbers (offensive stats) from metal bats wouldn't translate to wooden bats. With the ban, there's a lot less offense, but a lot better game."

WRITER, (POSITION IF NEEDED) | VALLEY STAR

SWING - Sylvette Rodriguez connects with a pitch in Thursday's first game of a double-header against Citrus College.

MONARCHS START CONFERENCE PLAY

Valley College softball team lost at home in a double-header to Citrus College.

COURTNEY BASSLER
STAFF WRITER

The Lady Monarch softball team faced Citrus College last Thursday in a double-header at Valley College. A cool breeze and warm weather provided the perfect setting for a Monarch victory; however, Valley lost both games 5-3 and 7-6 in the conference openers.

Valley showed little offense in the first game with its first run in the sixth inning. Errors in the game seemed to be an issue for both teams, but ultimately hurt the Monarchs.

"We got stronger as the game went on," said Valley Assistant Coach Lorena Arreguin after the first game. "Once we put the balls into play, [Citrus] started making errors. We just have to make small adjustments and it will be a cleaner game defensively."

The double-header marked the first game for the Western State Blue Division. Despite losing the first game, the Monarchs came out confident in the second.

"I'm glad that we have a second game here because I know we're going to come out ready to beat those Owls," said Arreguin prior to game two.

Although the Monarchs came out with more intensity in the second game, the Owls' offense proved to be too much for the Valley defense. In the bottom of the second inning the game was tied 1-1. However, in the third inning the Owls posted two runs, making the score 3-1. Citrus outfielder Brittni Moreno ended the third inning with a home run, giving Citrus the lead of 5-1. Citrus kept its lead, however.

Though the Monarchs came within one run of the Owls' the team could not overcome its defensive counterpart, losing the second game 7-6. The two losses give the Monarchs a 0-2 conference record.

"I thought we battled with a good team and unfortunately came up on the losing end," said Valley Head Coach Frankie Garcia. "We simply need to hit runners in when they are in scoring position. We are a good hitting team; we just didn't get the hits at the right time."

Valley played Saturday at home against Pasadena College, which marked the seventh win for the Lady Monarchs, making their overall record 7-10. The Lady Monarchs are slated to play the Mission Eagles at Sylmar Thursday in a double-header in its second conference match up of the season.

ANALYZE THIS

NFL OWNERS: STRAP ON YOUR JOCK STRAPS

The decision made by NFL owners not to show the players union the books shows the organizations true colors.

LUCAS THOMPSON

It may be time to begin outfitting NFL league owners with mouthpieces, jock straps and Troy Polamalu wigs after they requested that players take a pay cut for the 2011 season due to low profits in the nation's most popular and lucrative sport.

Despite the exceedingly growing success of the NFL, league owners have insisted that players take a $1 billion pay cut to offset the so called "losses" several teams have incurred over the past several years.

The players union quickly responded to the proposal with an inquiry of its own; show us the book and prove it. But foolishly, as big corporate companies often do, the owners shot down the request and in turn have made the argument of "we're losing money" irrelevant, and moreover unbelievable; thus, leaving negotiations at a standstill.

I mean let's face it, keeping tight-lipped about the real financial status of the NFL's owners can do nothing more but hurt the argument they pose to the players union, that is, unless they are hiding something. Opening the books to reveal that teams are losing money and profits would seem to be logical, wouldn't it? Unfortunately this seems to be just another ploy from a corporate giant to undercut its biggest assets, its product … the players.

"The NFL brought this fight to us -- they want $1 billion back. We just want financial information to back up that request," New Orleans Saints quarterback and union executive committee member Drew Brees said Friday via Twitter. "They refuse to give that information to us. They think we should just trust them. Would you?"

I mean how could they trust them? In a day and age in which our economy is in crisis, massive corporations are falling to bankruptcy, and Wall Street continues to screw over the little guys on Main Street, you think the NFL would display a little more cooperation with those who not only generate the $9 billion in revenue the NFL brings in each year, but also line their pockets.

It's the players who make the drama, excitement and peril we as football fans love – not the owners. Moreover, the players are not asking for more money, they are simply asking to see proof that teams in the league are flailing and at times losing money as they claim.

Ignorantly and without explanation a compromise has not been reached and the players association has filed paperwork to decertify. Owners have locked out the players, and the fate of a 2011 season continues to remain in jeopardy.

Time to see what you got owners. Time to see what you can do on the field. Let's see how many people show up to watch you play … my guess is zero.

E-mail Lucas Thompson at editor@lavalleystar.com